1996 Census of Canada

Release #4

Language and Aboriginal Data

NOVA SCOTIA
Finance
Fiscal & Economic Policy
Statistics

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This release details language and aboriginal data. Information for this report was gathered from Statistics Canada's *Daily* releases of December 2, 1997 and January 13, 1998 as well as from various data tables released from the 1996 Census. The next release from the census is on February 17, 1998 when data on Ethnic Origin and Population Group will be available. Further information is available by contacting the Statistics Division, Nova Scotia Department of Finance at (902) 424-5691.

Language

Data from the 1996 Census shows that the multilingual nature of Canada is increasing. Rising levels of immigration over the last two decades has allowed for greater cultural diversity and subsequent growth in the populations who speak the languages associated with those cultures.

Mother Tongue

Mother Tongue refers to the first language learned at home in childhood and still understood by the individual at the time of the census.

On the 1996 Census form respondents could indicate whether they had a single mother tongue or multiple mother tongues. In 1996, 895,775 residents of Nova Scotia or 99.5% indicated they had only a single mother tongue. English was the predominant mother tongue of this group with a 93.4% representation, followed by French at 3.9% and other languages at 2.7%. In 1986 the proportion was 94.6% English, 3.6% French and 1.8% other languages. It is evident that, despite the small overall representation, the group of non-official languages is growing the fastest.

The subset of the population with a mother tongue other than English or French is referred to as allophone in Canada. The most common allophone mother tongue in the province was Micmac followed by Arabic, German and Dutch (see Table 1).

The areas of the province that are aren't majority anglophone are the francophone Acadian settlements on the southwest shore of mainland Nova Scotia and in the area of Isle Madame in Cape Breton. Specifically, these are the municipal districts of Argyle in Yarmouth County and Clare in Digby County as well as a standard census geography known as Subdivision "C" in Richmond County.

At the national level the linguistic mosaic is more pronounced. In 1996, anglophones made up nearly 60% of the Canadian population followed by francophones at almost 24% and allophones at 17%. Since 1991 there was a 15.1% increase in the number of allophones in the country with all provinces except for the Prairies contributing to that increase. Over the same five year period anglophones and francophones increased 4.7% and 2.3% respectively.

The three largest groups of allophones in the country in 1996 were Chinese, Italian and German. In 1971 the three largest groups were German, Italian and Ukrainian. The fastest growing allophone languages in the last five years were Chinese, Punjabi, Arabic and Tagalog (Pilipino).

TABLE 1

NOVA SCOTIA POPULATION BY DETAILED MOTHER TONGUE - 1996 CENSUS

	Male	Female	Total Population
Total Population	438,775	461,190	899,970
Single Responses	436,760	459,015	895,775
English	407,320	428,920	836,240
French	16,910	18,130	35,040
Micmac	1,955	2,010	3,960
Arabic	1,615	1,325	2,940
German	1,310	1,445	2,760
Dutch	1,100	1,080	2,180
Chinese	1,090	1,045	2,125
Greek	455	475	930
Italian	460	385	845
Polish	470	335	795
Hindi	255	230	485
Spanish	190	250	440
Urdu	280	145	435
Vietnamese	240	185	420
Punjabi	205	185	390
Portuguese	175	145	320
Tagalog (Pilipino)	125	190	310
Multiple Responses	2,020	2,175	4,195
English and French	1,125	1,275	2,400
English and non-official Language	830	805	1,635
French and non-official Language	35	65	100
English, French and non-official Language	20	35	55

In Quebec the number of allophones has surpassed the number of anglophones. The representation in 1996 was francophone 81.5%, allophone 9.7% and anglophone 8.8%. Twenty five years earlier, in 1971, the proportion of anglophones was 13% compared to 6% for the allophones.

Home Language

Home Language is defined as the language spoken most often at home by the individual at the time of the census.

The predominant language spoken in Nova Scotian homes was English (96.5%) followed by French (2.2%) and other languages at 1.3%. The most common non-official language was Micmac followed by Arabic, Chinese and German. Even though there are greater percentages of people reporting their mother tongue as something other than English it is interesting to note that conversations at home are biased further towards English. When the immigrant population settles here and raise families the parents have either learned English before arriving or learn it shortly after arrival and the children born here usually learn English as their mother tongue.

TABLE 2

NOVA SCOTIA POPULATION BY HOME LANGUAGE - 1996 CENSUS

	Total
Total Population	899,970
Single Responses	895,900
English	864,235
French	19,970
Micmac	2,920
Arabic	1,720
Chinese	1,465
German	1,020
Multiple Responses	4,065
English and French	1,445
English and non-official Language	2,570
English, French and non-official Language	60

There is a group of 4,065 individuals in the province who conduct home conversations roughly equally between two or more languages. The most common was English and a non-official language followed by English and French. No one reported speaking French and a non-official language while sixty people reported home conversations conducted in English, French and a non-official language.

At the national level, in 1996, English was the home language of 67.6% of individuals followed by 22.6% for French and 9.8% for non-official languages. Compared with 1991 the

percentages were 68.3, 23.3 and 8.4 respectively.

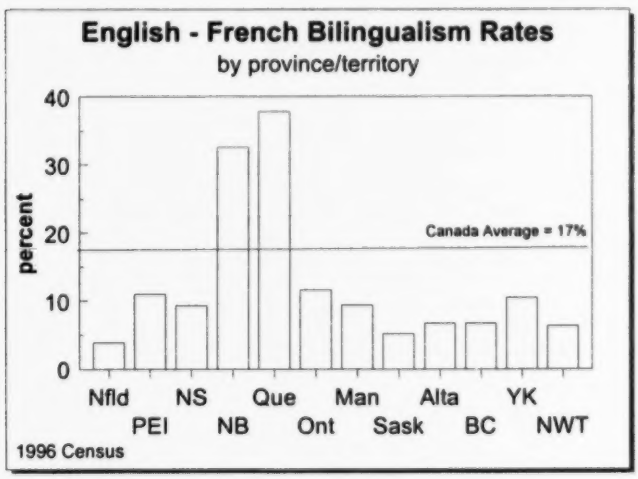
A language shift occurs when a person speaks a different home language than their mother tongue. This is most often seen in francophones who reside outside Quebec. These individuals, who have a mother tongue of French, spoke another language (mainly English) at home in 37% of cases in 1996, up from 35% in 1991. Anglophones living in Quebec also have a fairly high language shift. In 1996 10.2% of anglophones spoke another language at home (mainly French), up from 9.9% in 1991.

Bilingualism

Bilingualism in English and French increased at the national and provincial levels over the last five years.

In Nova Scotia, in 1996, 9.3% of the population reported an ability to conduct a conversation in both English and French. In 1991 only 8.6% of the population had that ability. There is a small minority of people who can't speak English in the province. Roughly 1,300 people were able to speak only French and 1,300 others spoke only a non-official language.

At the national level English-French bilingualism is more prevalent and growing more rapidly than it is in Nova Scotia. Both official languages were spoken by 17% of the Canadian population, up from 16% in 1991. Quebec had the highest level of bilingualism at 38% followed by New Brunswick at 33%. The lowest rate occurred in Newfoundland where only 3.9% of the population could speak both official languages.



Montreal had the highest rate of bilingualism of any census metropolitan area (CMA) in the country at 49.7% followed by Ottawa-Hull at 44%. The rate in Halifax was 10.7%.

Aboriginal Data

Aboriginal data derived from the 1991 Census came from the ethnicity question and therefore was based on a person's ancestry. In the 1996 Census, people were instead asked, if they personally identified with one or more of North American Indian, Metis or Inuit. This is the first time that the Aboriginal population includes individuals who are not Treaty or Registered Indians. Registered Indians are individuals who are registered under the Indian Act of Canada. Treaty Indians are persons who are registered under the Indian Act and can prove that they are descended from a band that signed a treaty.
For this reason data from the 1996 Census cannot be compared with data from previous censuses.

The Aboriginal population in Nova Scotia in 1996 was 12,380 or 1.4% of the total population. The largest group were North American Indians numbering 10,910 or 88% of the total Aboriginal population. Metis people numbered 825 and Inuits numbered 210. Registered and Treaty Indians Numbered 9,260. Those living on a reserve numbered 6,760 or almost three-quarters of the population.

In the Census Metropolitan Area (CMA) of Halifax there were 2,115 people who identified themselves as Aboriginal. North American Indians numbered 1,780 followed by 290 Metis and 55 Inuit.

At the national level about 3% of the Canadian population or 799,010 individuals identified with an Aboriginal group. North American Indians represented 69.3% of this population. Ontario had the largest North American Indian population, Alberta the largest Metis population and the Northwest Territories had the largest Inuit population. Most of the Aboriginal population lived west of Quebec. Only 14% of Canada's Aboriginal population lived in Atlantic Canada and Quebec. The provinces with the largest numbers of Aboriginals were Ontario, British Columbia and Manitoba.